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ABSTRACT

This guide is developed for individuals, organizations, and communities interested in helping runaway youth. The first four sections discuss the numbers and types of runaways and illustrate the problems presented by youth using buses and trains to run away from home. Specific characteristics and behavior of runaways are outlined to assist in the design of programs for identifying and assisting these youth. The fifth section highlights successful elements of existing runaway programs: recommendations for establishing and maintaining programs are presented. The sixth section consists of detailed case studies of four separate programs that address the problem of runaways in and around bus stations. A directory of organizations familiar with the problems of and programs for runaways in and around transportation centers is also included. (Author/NRB)

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on the run

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Railroad Administration

A Guide for Helping Runaway Youth in Transportation Centers

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CG 015230

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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A Guide to Helping
Runaway Youth in
Transportation Centers

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Preface

In response to the President's Proclamation designating 1979 as the International Year of the Child, the Federal Railroad Administration, an agency of the United States Department of Transportation, retained Arthur D. Little, Inc. to produce this document that provides information and guidance to transportation centers in coping with the problem of runaway youth. Every year thousands of youngsters pass through transportation centers in running away from home. These youth are often alone, confused and personally vulnerable. The various components of the transportation system have the opportunity and the obligation, to provide these youngsters with alternatives to the all too common result of exploitation and injury.

This booklet profiles a number of successful programs currently in existence that provide choices to youngsters who are wrestling with emotional and social pressures associated with running away.

The information contained in the following pages will enable state and local governments, private organizations, or other interested parties to understand and cope with this increasing problem. Such an understanding would provide the basis for improving existing programs or developing programs where none are available. Emphasizing the transportation system as a potential remedy rather than the vehicle by which the problem is perpetuated offers the opportunity for innovation, awareness, and responsiveness in addressing a most critical situation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those representatives at the various programs outlined in this document for their time and effort in providing vital information for this project.

John M. Sullivan
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration

In memory of Robert F. Coll, who was instrumental in getting this project started—he realized the problems encountered by runaway youths and the need for a study on how transportation centers can recognize and help youth on the run.

Introduction

Youth are running away from home in alarming numbers. Many are using buses and trains to travel to unfamiliar cities and towns. What may promise to be an escape from serious problems at home or school, and offer a bit of adventure, often turns into a tragic trap from which the youth cannot escape. Presently, few programs are designed to assist these youth in and around transportation facilities. Existing programs that address this issue employ a variety of approaches and methods to reach these youth, while they all aim at reducing the human, facility, community, and social costs associated with runaways. This brief study was undertaken to determine what types of problems exist and what is being done to assist runaways. The problem is serious and too little is being done about it. It is sincerely hoped that the information in this document will assist concerned individuals, communities, and organizations begin or enhance efforts that will help runaway youth beset by problems largely beyond their control.

The first four sections of this document discuss the numbers and types of runaways and illuminate the problems presented by youth using buses and trains to run away from their homes. Specific characteristics and behavior of runaways are outlined to assist in the design of efforts for identifying and assisting runaways. A brief discussion of what can be done in this area follows.

The fifth section highlights some of the elements of each program which contribute to their success. Also, recommendations for establishing and maintaining programs are presented.

The sixth section consists of detailed case studies of four separate programs that address the problem of runaways in and around bus stations. An extensive nationwide search did not find any programs in and around train stations designed to work solely with runaways. Information presented is intended to inform the reader of what is involved in initiating and maintaining an effective program.

Finally, a directory of organizations familiar with the problems of and programs for runaways in and around transportation centers is included. These organizations are valuable sources of information.

Material for this booklet was gathered from extensive surveys and studies of youth, interviews with youth service experts, and on-site visits to the programs. Published sources of information included the *National Statistical Survey*, by Opinion Research Corporation, a subsidiary of Arthur D. Little, Inc.; *Runaways, Illegal Aliens in Their Own Land: Implications for Service* by Scientific Analysis Corporation; *The Incidence and Nature of Runaway Behavior*, by Behavioral Research and Evaluation Corporation; and *The Social Psychology of Runaways*, by Brennan et.al. Lexington Books.

The Scope of the Problem

An estimated one million children run away from home every year and the problem seems to be getting larger. Although our youth population has been decreasing, it appears that the runaway rate has been increasing relative to the total youth population. FBI Uniform Crime Reports, police missing persons records, and records of youth serving programs such as runaway shelters show a steady increase in the numbers of youth who run away from home.

Many of these youth put great distances between themselves and their homes. A national survey of homeless youth revealed that about 18 percent ran more than 50 miles from home. The same study showed that at least 10 percent used either a bus or a train in running away. If this random sampling is representative, then out of an estimated 1 million runaway youth, as many as 100,000 may be using buses and/or trains to leave home. Youth who run away from home are susceptible to exploitation by strangers, violence by others, crime, drugs, and prostitution. Some transportation centers have become convenient recruiting grounds for pimps who lure young girls and boys into prostitution and others who offer room and board to children in exchange for sexual favors.

Significant numbers of runaways either pass through or end up in transportation centers and thus are susceptible to such exploitation. For example, the New York Port Authority's special Youth Services Unit has contacted over 3,700 runaways in the Port Authority Bus Terminal in its last three years of operation. Roughly 2,500 of these lived outside of New York City with as many as 555 youth coming from states outside of New York, New Jersey, and New England. Recent figures indicate that the number of runaways identified in the bus terminal is steadily increasing.

The Costs of Running Away

Running away is a costly experience for the child, the community, and the transportation facility. The price a child risks paying in terms of physical and psychological harm when he or she runs away from home is very high. The following story of "Sally Strauss," a teenage runaway in Los Angeles, illustrates what can happen to runaways.

"Sally Strauss" (not her real name), a teenager from northern California, is typical of the runaways encountered by programs assisting runaways in many California cities. She grew up in a small, rural town with three brothers and sisters and parents who divorced when she was in high school. The divorce upset the family life and Sally's school work suffered. Her mother grounded her for a month, warning her that if her grades did not improve she would be restricted even longer.

Upset at the punishment, Sally sneaked out her bedroom window and ran to a nearby girlfriend's house. She had planned to return home before her mother discovered her absence but her mother found out immediately, and called the girlfriend. Afraid of the mother's anger, the girlfriend lied about Sally being at her house. Rather than face her mother, Sally decided to run away and borrowed money for bus fare to Los Angeles.

Sally arrived at the Los Angeles bus terminal with $1.50 in her pocket and the name of a cousin she remembered living in the city but whom she had not heard from in three years. Upon arrival she spent most of her money on a sandwich then tried to find the cousin's name in the telephone directory. Not finding the name, she wandered through the terminal afraid and upset. Although she saw several security police and a Travelers Aid sign she was afraid to approach them for fear of being returned home and facing her mother. Several men approached her, including a nicely dressed young man whose friendliness convinced her to accompany him to his hotel room to use his phone. In his room he demanded sexual favors in return for use of the phone. When Sally refused he hit her several times and tried to rape her. She managed to escape his grasp and ran out into the streets where she hid behind a trash container in an alley. Terrified that he was looking for her Sally stayed behind the container all night.

The next morning, she returned to the bus station. Seeing the Travelers Aid sign, she waited in the women's room until the offices opened for the day. The first person she met at Travelers Aid was a counselor and caseworker. At first, Sally told the worker that she had lost the telephone number of a relative in Los Angeles whom she was to meet. After they had talked for a while, Sally began to reveal the true story: the attempted rape, why she had left home, how her pride and shame had kept her from calling her mother, and how she had spent the night, terrified that other men would approach her. The police were called and began to look for the man who tried to rape Sally.

Although ashamed and afraid, Sally agreed to telephone her mother, who by this time was frantic about her daughter. The girlfriend had told her where Sally had gone. The mother was overjoyed to hear from Sally and immediately arranged to come to Los Angeles to pick her up. When Sally's mother arrived the counselor convinced her that she and Sally should see a counselor in thier community and begin to resolve their problems.

Although somewhat dramatized, Sally's story is not unusual. A 1976 study by Scientific Analysis Corporation, revealed that 85 percent of certain runaway types suffered sexual abuse while on the run. Many children were lured into providing sexual favors in exchange for food, shelter, and/or transportation—as many as 33 percent of one sample. It is estimated that as many as 3 percent of the yearly runaway population or 30,000 children engage in prostitution as a means of survival. Many of these kids, once lured or forced into prostitution, are then forced to continue or face physical harm. Other human costs such as the price of being arrested for a delinquent offense must also be considered.

The community pays a price also. A study of runaway youth in Colorado by Behavioral Research and Evaluation Corporation discovered that 33 percent of a large sample committed petty theft (less than $5) while 15 percent of the same sample stole items worth $50 or more. Youth who ran more than 10 miles from home and stayed away from one week to several months report having committed burglary, car theft, and shoplifting more frequently than other runaways. Runaway youth also engage in selling drugs. The Colorado study indicated that 20 percent of the sample sold drugs while 11 percent sold hard drugs other than marijuana while running. Another cost to the community results from court processing of runaway children. Running away is against the juvenile law in many states. Large numbers of runaways are taken to court every year because of a lack of programs that could intervene before this final step. Every court case costs taxpayers money. It is

estimated that New York City is saved $1.2 million annually through the New York Port Authority's Youth Services Unit's efforts to place runaways at home or in temporary shelter care instead of referring them to court.

The bus or train station must assume costs of runaways in and around the facility. Hard figures are not available but most station managers know that young runaways are targets for pimps and other undesirables and that such individuals do not hesitate to stake out transportation facilities as recruiting grounds. The costs are difficult to estimate; however, pimping and prostitution usually coexist with high crime areas (in this case around the transportation facility) and thus would tend to drive away potential transportation customers. Another potential cost is the liability a station could conceivably incur if a runaway youth or any other person was hurt in an altercation, a possibility in an environment that includes pimps, perverts, and other undesirables.

Who are the Runaways?

There are no "typical" runaways. They are both boys and girls from all kinds of homes, from all ethnic groups and they run away for a wide variety of reasons. However, several studies have identified broad characteristics of runaway youth.

- **Age:** Youth 14, 15, and 16 years old account for four out of five runaway episodes. The average age is 16. As the runaway gets older, the length of the runaway episode increases as does the distance of the run. The young runaway, 13 and under, makes most frequent use of public transportation such as buses and trains, although they do not run away as frequently or as far a distance as the older runaway. The Port Authority Youth Services Unit's statistics show an average age of 15.
- **Sex:** The National Statistical Survey indicated that about 53 percent of all runaways are boys. New York Port Authority figures show a rough 50 - 50 split between girls and boys for all the runaways apprehended in the Port Authority Bus Terminal.
- **Ethnicity:** No one ethnic group has a significantly higher proportion of runaways. The New York Port Authority reported in 1979 that of the total number of runaways identified in the bus terminal (3,056), 52 percent were Caucasian, 33 percent were Black, and 15 percent were Hispanic.
- **Socio-economic class:** No significant differences among runaways with regard to socio-economic class have been found.
- **Reasons for running:** Studies of why children run away from home report that, although a wide variety of reasons exist for running, family conflict and low self-esteem because of negative labeling in such places as the school and community are the most common reasons.

It is a mistake to attempt to place every runaway in a category explaining why he or she runs away. There are simply too many complex factors involved. However, a great deal of research has linked general runaway types with specific reasons for running. These are summarized here to explain further the problems of runaways.

1. **Short-term runaways** (away from home a week or less) experience some degree of conflict with parents and brothers and sisters. Most do not do well in school. These youth may or may not think of themselves as failures and, correspondingly, as the cause of the problem leading to the runaway episode. They break down into two basic types:
   - Young and seeking a temporary escape, these runaways often suffer neglect, emotional and physical abuse, and/or parental rejection. The home is commonly wracked by marital conflict. Ironically, these youth have strong psychological ties to their families and usually return voluntarily within 3 days of running away. These youth are generally around 13 years old and are represented in every ethnic and socio-economic group. Although more apt to use public transportation to escape than older runaways, they generally do not travel as far or stay away as long. Therefore, their presence in transportation facilities is less noticeable.
   - Older, unrestrained, peer-oriented runaways (average age of 16) are largely independent of their families although they once felt ties. School failure and trouble in the community may lead to pressure to run away, although these youth report the runaway experience more rewarding and adventurous than do the younger runners. They generally run with a friend, often use the bus or hitchhike, and stay away at least a week at a time. These youth are prone to run away repeatedly.

2. **Long-term runaways** are away from home several weeks to over 6 months, while many stay away permanently. Several types make up this group:

- **Middle class loners** tend to have few friends, run away alone, and generally are from a middle-class background. Family troubles are usually not given as a reason for running. Rather, these youth are autonomous and think of running away as a chance to explore outside their normal experience. They usually return voluntarily.

- **Rejected, constrained youth** have serious family problems evidenced by conflict with parents, and, oftentimes, excessive physical punishment. They are failures in school and are labeled such by teachers. Their friends are often delinquent. These youth run away repeatedly for a week or longer and seldom return home voluntarily.

  A subtype of this group is girls around 15 years old who, in addition to conflict with parents, experience an extreme level of supervision and control by their parents. These girls are angry, sometimes hostile, and tend to have conflicts with any type of authority.

  Another subgroup is boys 15 or older, who receive very little attention from their parents. What attention they get is usually negative. Their peer groups are delinquent and they tend to run with such friends.

- **Homeless youth** are runaways who have been thrown out of home. Surprisingly, an even mix of males and females make up this group. Usually 15 years and older, they stay away several months at a time and many never return more than to visit. Although these youth have not really "run away" from home, they are so labeled by our legal system. Parents of these runaways are indifferent, view their children as failures, and reject them. Alienation from society, failure in school, delinquent peers, and continuous running characterize these youth.

- **Independent youth** are not at all dependent on their families, exhibit the well-developed ability to survive on the streets or elsewhere, and generally "run" to a selected destination having carefully planned the episode. They are considered runaways because of their age, although many of them have parental permission to be on their own. This probably is a small population comprised mostly of girls, 16 to 18 years old. Those that return home are generally forced to by police and soon leave again.

Some general runaway characteristics are true in most every case:

- Youths who run away repeatedly tend to have suffered greater amounts of abuse and neglect than those who run away once or twice.
- The length of time spent away from home and the distance traveled increases as the age of the runaway increases.
- The chances of permanently returning a youth home decreases as the number of runaway episodes increases and the youth acquires the skills for surviving even in the most sordid environments.

What Can Be Done?

Given the wide variety of reasons why kids run away and the different types of kids who run away, a range of approaches is needed to help them. At one end of the spectrum is so-called passive intervention. This is simply making the runaway aware through posters, leaflets, announcements, etc. that assistance is available if the runaway decides to seek help. Experienced youth workers claim that this approach is most attractive to the suspicious or hostile youth who may have a history of conflicts with authority, parents perhaps, and will not approach any kind of formal service perceived to be part of the adult world. The Scientific Analysis Corporation study reveals that more than half of the runaways interviewed distrust all formal agencies. Over three-fourths of the sample did not use any formal or informal type of services. However, the study also revealed that less than one-fifth were aware of services available and, most importantly, all of those aware of alternatives to the traditional justice and child welfare systems services, such as runaway houses, used them.

Passive intervention in the form of posters hung in strategic locations within transportation centers and leaflets are also the least costly way to reach the greatest numbers of runaways. This approach also has the advantage of potentially reaching all types of runaways.

Still, a more active intervention strategy is needed for some runaways. Many do not read well, if at all, and in some environments a confused youngster can be lured by pimps and others before they contact a service listed in a leaflet. These factors lead to a need for what might be called moderate intervention, such as outreach by qualified youth workers who seek out runaways and offer assistance in a non-threatening way. Well-trained youth workers, cautious of passengers' rights, have operated in and around transportation centers with success. Runaways will listen to someone who knows how to approach them, who can say things to help them feel comfortable, who may even dress, talk, and act a bit like they do. Unfortunately, pimps and similar types can do all of these things also.

Finally, some runaways because of confusion, fear, and/or hostility will not do anything that might get them locked up or returned to a situation that has not improved since they ran away. Reaching these youth requires active intervention. Such an approach may require the authority of law enforcement when the runaway is identified and contacted. Legal authority can be coupled with social work or counseling skills that encourage the runaway to take advantage of services.

Program Elements

Successful programs assisting runaways in and around transportation centers are effective largely because of certain elements which insure that the proper assistance is delivered in a timely, organized, and efficient manner. The most significant of these elements are discussed in this section within the framework of recommendations for program development in the hope that they will be highlighted for the reader in the following section on program descriptions. The recommendations for program development are based on the experiences of individuals involved in beginning, expanding and maintaining the programs described later.

Identify the Problem

This is the first step. Money is always scarce for social programs, especially less traditional programs, and funding sources will continue to demand more results for less money and thorough documentation of program effectiveness. This calls for custom tailoring of an effort to assist runaways.

The programs described later represent a majority of the successful programs in this subject area. Significantly, three of the four were initiated by one or a few concerned individuals who saw a problem concerning runaways in and around transportation centers.

Each of these programs started small with the originators taking special care to become familiar with the scope and nature of the problem. Those involved in starting the programs recognized that there are a variety of reasons why kids run away, many of which are complex family problems complicated even more by problems in the community or schools. Many held the belief that running away is often a legitimate response to an unhealthy, sometimes dangerous situation at home or elsewhere. To this day, everyone involved in the programs is commited to understanding the runaway's problems as perceived by the runaway, not only as perceived by parents, school officials, law enforcement, or others. Such commitment increases the chance that the runaway and the family will receive the proper assistance in confronting problems. At the same time, all involved eventually realized that many runaways' problems cannot be solved overnight, if ever, just as they realized that seldom can any one program bring about a permanent resolution to these problems. Realistic attitudes about what a program can and cannot do for runaways are essential to success.

With a commitment to runaways as a underlying philosophy, program originators then further defined and documented the scope and nature of the problem before looking for additional support to assist runaways. To identify the problem, seek information on the following:

- **Numbers of runaways** in the area. Consult youth service agencies, transportation facility management, law enforcement, courts, and youth advocacy groups.
- **How runaways arrive in the area.** Existing runaway services or youth services agencies, including law enforcement, are most likely to have this information.
- **Types of runaways** such as age, sex, ethnicity, location of home, reasons for running, previous runaway episodes, etc. Youth service agencies are most likely to have this information.
- **Service needs of runaways**, such as food, shelter, individual and family counseling, can be identified with the help of local youth service providers.

Statistics will provide only the bare bones of information and need to be supplemented by the views, opinions, and first-hand experiences of individuals who come into regular contact with runaways in the area. Interviews with at least the following types of individuals will help define the problem:

- Transportation facility personnel, especially security and management.
- Youth service personnel, in particular those who work with runaways from outside of the area who may have used buses or trains to come to the area. Check with local law enforcement (especially juvenile officers and patrol officers), interstate compact officials, runaway program people, protective services and family services personnel, and court service personnel.
- Runaways themselves, as these youth know best why they are running. Consult with local youth service personnel to set up interviews with runaways.
- Individuals within the problem area such as street vendors, bartenders, people living on the streets, and prostitutes both male and female. When approached with total honesty and genuine concern, these people often have the most to tell.

Develop a problem statement full of hard figures, quotes from recognized and respected individuals, and true examples of runaways in the area. This statement will be valuable if it is written clearly enough so that a person with no knowledge of runaways can understand the problem.

Detail Program Activities

Even though problem identification will suggest what type of intervention is most likely to be effective with runaways, the attitudes and opinions of transportation facility management and the surrounding community will also help determine what type of approach will be allowed in the facility and tolerated in the community. Additionally, a thorough check of federal, state, and local laws is essential to see what is legally allowable. For instance, Interstate Commerce Commission regulations require public accommodations, i.e., bus terminals, to guarantee passenger privacy. State laws must be consulted to determine if minors can be approached without a violation of privacy.

It should be noted that the problem may not be a lack of service but that existing services in the community are not being coordinated and brought to bear in and around the transportation center. Our study revealed situations in which outreach services to runaways on the streets and in pornography and prostitution districts were being provided but nearby transportation centers were overlooked. Most often this was due to insufficient resources but in some cases it was due to an inability to coordinate with transportation center management and/or police. If the problem of runaways in transportation centers is recognized it is often given a low priority in comparison to youth issues elsewhere in the community. What may be needed is a program or campaign to publicize the problem, make it a priority in the community, and create a coordinated effort between existing youth service providers.

Whether the best approach is to coordinate existing services or to create a new program (or both) once the problem is documented and tentative ideas have been generated, two options are available. One is to contact key individuals and groups in the community whose support would help build a program. Approaching these individuals alerts them to the problem and may gain their support. Indicate to them that their involvement in program development is welcome if they can make a sufficient commitment. If qualified people make a commitment, a Board of Directors should be formed. Or, the possibility of establishing a program under the umbrella of an existing, credible organization might be explored.

Another option for action is to develop, on your own or with the help of a small supportive group, procedures, methods, resources required, etc. This is suggested if local individuals and organizations appear to be hostile towards the idea.

Regardless of the most appropriate time to develop a program plan, it should consist of certain key elements, including the following:

- **Purpose** clearly defined in a short, concise statement (e.g., assist runaways through counseling and other services to pursue the healthiest option available to them).
- **Goals** to make clear the general and specific interests of the program and the services it offers.
- **Methods, materials, and procedures** required to accomplish the goals, such as:
  - staff;
  - physical facility;
  - operation;
  - resources available for referrals;
  - management procedures; and,
  - evaluation procedures.
- **Resources** needed to accomplish the goals, such as:
  - funding, short and long-term;
  - other agencies with which the program should be coordinated;
  - volunteers, student interns, and other "free" staff help; and
  - donations of materials or time of individuals speaking on behalf of the program.

Budgets and financial plan. Several types of budgets are helpful, including yearly, monthly, planning performance, and program budgets. A financial plan includes the budget and other essentials such as recordkeeping and accounting procedures. A short- and long-term fundraising plan should be included.

Develop Support and Resources

Building support of program development and maintenance is a continuous process. The degree and type of support must be carefully measured. It is a good idea to strike a low profile in most communities although key individuals and organizations should be contacted and possibly granted an on-going role in program direction. Task forces of committed and influential individuals may be formed to work on particular problem areas (e.g., fundraising, studies of runaway service needs, and service network development) or to identify and develop resources.

Resources development, that is, identifying and using services to which runaways can be referred, is crucial to program effectiveness. In most communities, services tailored to runaways' needs are minimal. Runaway shelters and counseling services that exist are filled with referrals from courts, police, and families. Traditional youth service agencies such as children's protective services and public mental health facilities do not focus on the special needs of runaways. Two options are open. Existing resources can be identified and personnel educated to the special needs of runaway youth. Or, the intervention program can take the lead in publicizing the need for and development of services. In the first case, the intervention program must work out formal agreements with the resource specifying the services to be provided. The latter option is more productive if coordinated with existing services so that a network for runaways is established. The Bridge has agreements not only with outside agencies but also between its own internal components. Agreement with other organizations insures services for runaways through referral and allows the program in the transportation center to concentrate on its primary functions: identification, immediate assistance, and referral to long-term assistance.

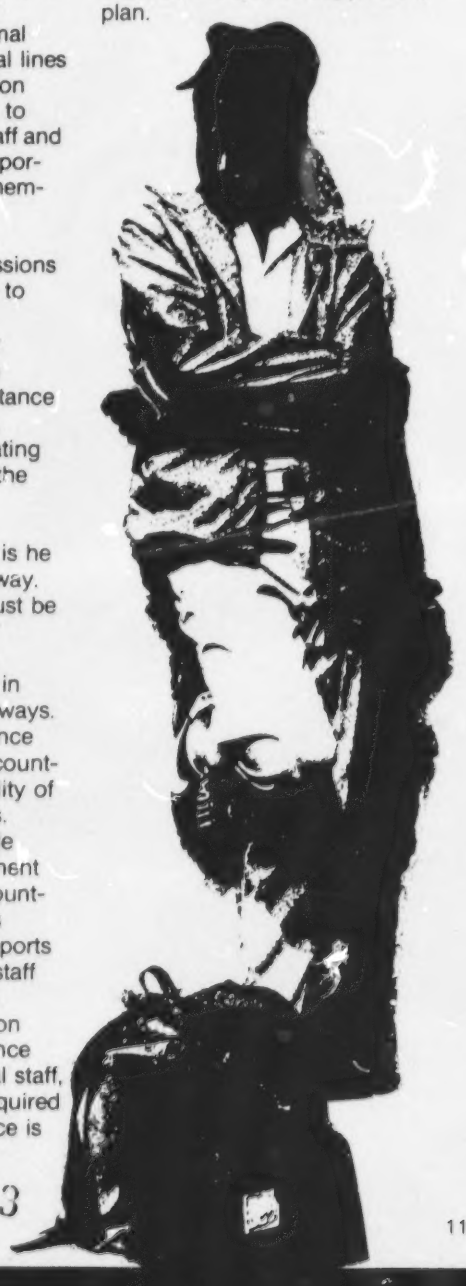
Administering and Delivering Assistance

In addition to being carefully planned, the programs described later are successful because they are well-organized and tightly administered. Each has a formal organizational plan with formal lines of authority and communication specified. Also, it is important to structure a program so that staff and administrators have ample opportunity to coordinate among themselves and each other. Staff meetings, program planning meetings, and staff review sessions are a few examples of means to insure communication.

The most significant factor contributing to success is the emphasis on delivery of assistance to be found in each program. Again, this is due to an operating philosophy which holds that the runaway is deserving of assistance; that he has not committed a criminal act nor is he mentally ill because he ran away. This philosophy, however, must be carried out through such mechanisms as requiring the director to regularly join staff in identifying and assisting runaways.

Insuring delivery of assistance requires that staff be held accountable for the quantity and quality of contacts made with runaways. Carefully selecting only people with experience and commitment for staff positions makes accountability easier. Still, procedures such as monitoring of staff reports of contacts, meeting with all staff regularly to discuss problems encountered, observing staff on the job, conducting performance review sessions with individual staff, and talking with clients are required to insure that quality assistance is delivered.

Assisting runaways is a very difficult job. The quality of assistance provided and the success of the program depends upon staff. Do not expect staff to perform well if they have not received proper training. A great strength of most of the programs described is that all staff, even those highly qualified, are given an orientation to their jobs and then provided with on-going training. When planning the program, a staff development plan should be developed and sufficient funds must be secured to support the plan.



Assisting Runaways

The programs described below all have an impact on the problem, even though each employs a different approach, and each has more than enough runaways to handle. Each program type achieves its goal of at least identifying and assisting runaways through referrals. This tells us that a variety of approaches are effective, and the ideal program might consist of a combination of the described programs.

The short-term escapist runaway responds best to active intervention approaches. This youth often decides to return home on his own; however, in the meantime harm can come to him. Programs similar to the New York Port Authority Youth Service Unit (YSU) and The Bridge are particularly effective in identifying these runaways.

The older, less constrained, short-term runaway is less apt to respond to authority and programs such as the YSU. This runaway often returns on his own, so less active intervention approaches such as the Greyhound campaign, TASLA, and The Bridge are most effective.

The long-term runaways, especially the middle class loner and the homeless youth may not respond to any approach until they are ready. The loner is usually not experiencing family problems and may respond simply to knowing that his family wants him home. Thus, actively approaching these youth is the best strategy. All types of intervention are effective with the homeless youth in the sense that these youth need food, shelter, and other services. Attempts to return these youth to their families will almost always fail.

Finally, many homeless youth have managed quite well living on the "run" and on the streets. These youth and independent runaways are most apt to avail themselves of services offered without requirements. Passive intervention will prove most helpful with them.

In almost every case except with the loner and the independent runaway, serious problems and conflicts face the runaway if he returns to his home community. Large numbers of runaways who have repeatedly run away indicate that return without measures taken to address reasons for running is fruitless.

Any intervention approach must be accompanied by services to the youth and the family. Some of these services can be offered in-house, such as assessment of the runaway's problems and needs. However, intervention and services must be well-separated as in The Bridge program. Intensive counseling, education or job training, or family work cannot be performed on the streets, in the bus terminal, or in the program office at the bus terminal. These services should be given the importance they need by holding them in a specially-designated space.

The intervention program can provide services to the youth and family solely through referral. This is the wisest approach for a new and small program because it allows personnel to concentrate on identifying and referring runaways, enough of a task in itself. If this approach is used then special attention must be paid to identifying resources and educating personnel. Intervention program staff must be allowed time to follow up on their referrals in order to determine their effectiveness.

Programs for Runaways

The problems of runaways are being addressed on both the national and local levels. Administrators, managers, and transportation decision-makers are instituting programs around bus stations and other facilities to deal with the increasing flow of runaway youth.

The programs presented here represent major commitments by communities and transportation centers to help runaways. Each is organized and operated differently, depending on the scope of the problem and the availability of resources. They illustrate passive approaches, as with the Greyhound, Inc. program, "Don't Rely on Strangers;" moderate intervention, as typified by the Travelers Aid program in Los Angeles; and an active response to runaways, as with the New York Port Authority Youth Services Unit. The fourth program detailed here, Bridge, Inc., uses a variety of techniques and contacts runaways in more than transportation centers. Its methods, however, can be easily applied to a runaway effort at rail or bus stations.

Greyhound's "Don't Rely on Strangers"

In 1978, Greyhound Lines, Inc., decided to address the problem of teenage travelers, particularly runaways, in its bus terminals. Chicago was selected as a test site and Greyhound placed colorful billboards designed to draw attention in strategic locations around its terminal. With the billboards were cards listing Chicago-area agencies and phone numbers where teens could receive free assistance. Included in this list were shelters for runaways, health referral agencies, drug abuse centers, and counseling services. The effort was christened, "Don't Rely on Strangers" and that is its central message. The idea is to provide youths with an alternative to the offers of food and shelter from people who might later exploit them.

Organization and Operations

Greyhound decided to use this passive method because a non-threatening approach would be best received by runaway youth. Linking a youth with services was considered a wise strategy because, Greyhound claims, over half of all teenagers referred to runaway services return home.

The pilot program was deemed a success by youth, Chicago police departments, social services agencies, and even taxi drivers who have asked for copies of the card to give youths needing assistance. As a result, Greyhound has expanded its program to 27 cities around the country in company-owned and operated bus terminals. Youth services named on cards report that runaways are using the Greyhound listings to find them.

Greyhound had very little trouble getting the program started primarily because it provides the funding and operates it only in company-owned terminals. However, Greyhound does take great pains to ensure that its billboard campaign is not only known around the community but also that the program's purposes are clearly understood. The introduction of billboards and cards has been accompanied by press conferences, taped, and broadcast on local television stations, in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Cleveland, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. Additionally, Greyhound sends letters soliciting support to youth serving organizations in each program site. Advance work and contacting influential sources of support have contributed to the program's success.

The cost of this effort is minimal. Two posters in each of the 27 stations required an initial outlay of $6,750. Listing services and producing printed cards cost roughly $500. Press conferences and other public awareness efforts cost Greyhound about $9,000 bringing the one-time initial cost of the effort to $16,250. Now, only $7,100 is required annually to update and reprint cards listing services for all participating stations.

Management

"Don't Rely on Strangers" is managed by Greyhound Lines, Inc. Relations with the youth-serving community and the general communities around the program sites are carefully cultivated. A major factor contributing to its success is that every effort is made to keep cards listing services up-to-date. Two final important aspects are that an individual high up in the management structure has sole responsibility for the program and that top-level management at Greyhound is committed to continuing the program. (For more information contact Director of Public Relations, Greyhound Lines, Inc., Greyhound Tower, Phoenix, Arizona 85077, Telephone: 602/248-5000.)

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Travelers Aid Society of Los Angeles

Travelers Aid Society of Los Angeles (TASLA) in the downtown Los Angeles Greyhound Bus Terminal serves people away from home who are having problems during travel or while making their way to new cities and communities. This is the primary objective for Travelers Aid Societies around the country. TASLA, however, is somewhat unique because of the number of runaway youth who are drawn to Los Angeles and pass through the conveniently located bus terminal on their way to the streets. TASLA seeks to help these youth by (1) arranging for transportation home, if desired, and/or (2) counseling and follow-up casework, and/or (3) linking them with services such as shelter, food, clothing, and further counseling.

Between 1976 and 1978, 3,410 youth aged 5-17 years old requested and received services from TASLA. Many of these children were runaways, in addition to being abused and neglected.

Chain of Services for Runaways

Through its membership in the Travelers Aid Association of America, TASLA is connected to a nationwide intercity social service network. This "chain of services" consists of 72 Travelers Aid programs and 800 Cooperating Representatives linking over 3,000 communities. Locally, a runaway seeking help would initially be interviewed by TASLA staff for information helpful in providing services. Although TASLA has no legal authority over traveling youth, it offers a session with a trained counselor to identify problems and possible solutions. From this session, a casework plan is developed that identifies problems and outlines steps to help the runaway solve them. For example, a runaway wants to return home but is afraid her stepfather, whose beatings caused her to run, will beat her when she returns. TASLA would either contact the Travelers Aid Society in her community (part of the chain of services) or if there isn't one then a social services agency. Either the local Travelers Aid or the agency would undertake a social investigation, including conversations with the parents if appropriate, to define the situation and provide the best support possible for the runaway when she might work with police or social service agencies in the runaway's community. Follow-up to ensure that services are provided is through phone calls to the youth and/or the services contacted earlier.

If a runaway cannot be returned home immediately, the TASLA has some options available. When parents have been contacted and arrangements for a return are being worked out, TASLA can refer the runaway to local runaway youth shelters or other residential facilities. Special arrangements have been made with these organizations in Los Angeles. If the runaway's parents cannot be contacted or the runaway does not want to return home, then TASLA can involve the police. Running away is still an offense in Los Angeles as in most jurisdictions. However, California juvenile law does allow police to refer the runaway to an approved runaway shelter if the youth is neither dangerous or endangered nor will run away from such a placement.

TASLA knows that runaways have many complex personal and family problems demanding more sophisticated and longer-term services than it can deliver. Only some of these runaways are first timers who, although afraid, are willing to return home. TASLA staff report three other basic types of runaways:

1. The runaway who has been away from home a long time and has survived through prostitution. This youth appears at TASLA when he or she is running from his or her chicken-hawk (a pimp for young male prostitutes) or pimp.
2. The runaway from mental health facilities. TASLA sees a significant number of these youth. Another type classified as a runaway are youth who have been released, in some cases dumped by mental health facilities, and either cannot find their way home or have no home to which to return.
3. The independent runaway who is usually nearly 18 years old and has his parents' tacit or expressed approval to be "on the road." Most of these youth are fairly self-sufficient but still are susceptible to misery or harm.

A formidable obstacle to TASLA and similar programs is the absence of legal authority for them to assume responsibility and work with runaways for more than 72 hours without parental permission. California law mirrors most states' law in that only police or courts, and court appointed officials can take jurisdiction over a runaway for more than 72 hours without parental permission. Two things are needed to correct this situation: (1) a law that would allow social service agencies (e.g., TASLA) to take responsibility for a runaway for longer than 24 to 72 hours and (2) shelters for runaways where they could stay while TASLA contacts parents and explores other options. Such developments would eliminate needless intervention by the police and courts.

A Passive Approach

TASLA's approach is passive intervention in the sense that runaways either voluntarily approach TASLA or they are referred by terminal security police. The TASLA office is somewhat hidden in a corner of the terminal but visibility and accessibility are increased by a desk in the main lobby and by including the TASLA phone number on hand-out cards kept in the main lobby. TASLA staff do not approach youth in the station and ask if they need help. The owners of the terminal feel that such outreach would duplicate the duties of security, which routinely refers runaways to police or TASLA.

Once the runaway has been referred to TASLA the agency becomes actively involved. The first few moments of talking to a runaway are critical to help him feel comfortable and non-threatened. Because most runaways fear they will be punished for running away, TASLA believes it is important not to ask too many probing questions initially. Rather, staff assist the runaway and do not pressure the youth for information. Other TASLA techniques are:

- **Accepting the youth's version of his problems during the initial contact.**
- **Doing something immediately in the youth's presence to demonstrate concern.** If the youth wants a job so he can become self-sufficient, then staff might call the local employment agency regardless of how unrealistic the prospects are of finding a job. TASLA staff try to maintain a helping relationship.
- **Providing services without requiring the youth to go into great detail on his problems, present feelings, or past life.** TASLA can call a youth or family service organization close to the runaway's home and arrange to have that service help him with the youth's agreement, rather than force the youth to explain his problems and situation.
- **Confronting youths when they exaggerate or contradict earlier statements.** Such confrontation is used only to clarify facts essential to providing services and only after the youth is reassured and receptive to help from TASLA.

TASLA maintains a desk in the main lobby of the terminal staffed by a counselor and/or a volunteer. If a runaway requests services, he is referred to the TASLA office. Initial information is gathered when youth and a counselor meet in a separate room to talk about counseling services and other needs. This prevents interruptions that can destroy the session's effectiveness.

Management and Staff

An executive director, a director of Casework Services (also the assistant director), and four counselors comprise the staff at the bus station. One counselor has a Master's degree in social work and three have Bachelor of Arts degrees with experience in human services. TASLA counselors must have the following qualifications:

- able to work with people in crises;
- interested in handling short-term cases, providing emergency counseling services, and referring to longer-term services;
- able to remain non-judgmental about all types of people; and,
- able to listen and communicate so as to encourage the client to communicate.

Counselors work primarily from 9 a.m. — 5 p.m. and their duties include:

- crisis intervention and basic counseling;
- problem identification and needs assessment;
- casework plan development;
- matching clients' needs to local services and services in the client communities; and,
- follow-up by phone or letter to ensure delivery of services.

The director of casework supervises and coordinates the counselors in addition to being responsible for the same duties as the counselors. The director also designs and delivers in-house training for counselors and volunteers. His responsibilities include ensuring that all documentation of services is complete and that statistics are accurate and up-to-date.

The executive director has overall management responsibilities. He works closely with the Board of Directors to ensure that board policy is carried out. He is also responsible for fundraising, financial planning and management coordination with local youth service agencies, community relations, and relations with other Travelers Aid Societies. The Board of Directors consists of volunteers, all of whom are established, active members of the community. The board sets policy and is responsible for all TASLA activities in addition to developing and implementing the fundraising plan for 15 to 25 percent of the budget (75 to 85 percent is provided by United Way). The board usually stages benefits to raise money.

The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for all of TASLA's operations. The executive director reports directly to the board and the casework director and counselors are directly responsible to the executive director. Several volunteers are trained and supervised by a volunteer coordinator.

Management procedures are set up within TASLA to ensure consistently delivered, quality services. Internally, TASLA requires that objectives be set in each client's casework plan. To determine if casework is successfully completed, the caseworker simply needs to compare plans with the recorded results. On-going guidance in casework is provided through regular supervisory sessions with counseling staff.

A bookkeeper/accountant maintains all of the required financial records. This not only ensures financial stability but also frees the program director to perform other pressing duties. An outside accounting firm performs an annual audit which is necessary for financial credibility and continued funding.

TASLA Affiliation

TASLA, a non-profit organization, is an affiliate of the Travelers Aid Association of America. It benefits from research, training, and technical assistance conducted by the National Office but otherwise is completely independent.

Travelers Aid Societies are generally formed through local initiative. To become a recognized affiliate, a local organization must meet specific standards. These include:

- service delivery plan in accordance with the Association's standards;
- financial plan identifying present resources and outlining fundraising strategies;
- funding sufficient to allow the organization to survive and deliver quality services according to its plan;
- a qualified, degreed individual to direct the organization; and,
- compliance with a set of principles developed by the National Association intended to guide service delivery.

The Association is developing a set of accreditation standards that it will require local affiliates to meet two years from the time they begin service delivery. Technical assistance will be provided by the Association to assist affiliates in meeting these standards. TASLA raises all of its own funds and the executive director and board members are active fundraisers. Presently, the organization has a $300,000 a year budget 75 to 85 percent of which comes from United Way with the balance raised by the Society through benefits.

Program Results

From 1976 to 1979, 2,296 youth aged 14 to 17 received services from TASLA. Follow-up phone calls ensured that almost all of the youth who allowed TASLA to arrange a return home or referral to another agency followed through on the service.

TASLA's passive intervention approach does not identify as many runaways as a more active approach. However, this non-threatening approach backed up by counseling and consistent follow-up results in a large percentage of runaways participating in services beyond those that TASLA offers. (For more information, contact Traveler's Aid Society of Los Angeles, 646 South Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, California 90014, Telephone: 213/625-2501.)

New York Port Authority Youth Services Unit

The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that as many as 10,000 runaways are loose in Manhattan on any given day, many of them from out of town. The New York Port Authority Bus Terminal, situated near a heavy prostitution and crime area, has always been a major conduit for youth, including runaways, into the city. In the early 1970s, the Port Authority Police recognized the need for special attention to be paid to the significant numbers of unaccompanied teenagers arriving by bus who, without money or a place to stay, wandered out into the surrounding streets. A special Youth Services Unit was established within the Port Authority Police to assist all youth. Then, as now, the top priority is helping runaway youth. Its primary purpose is to identify runaway youth while in the bus terminal and assist them before pimps and others reach them or before they wander into the streets and suffer physical and psychological harm. From 1976 through 1979, the Youth Services Unit has identified and assisted over 2,700 runaway youth.

History and Early Growth

In 1975, the Port Authority Police expanded its efforts. The bus terminal management recognized the advantages of efforts underway and approved the police plan to apply for federal funds to expand efforts, formalize a program, and evaluate its effectiveness. In 1976, the Port Authority Police received $164,000 from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the Department of Justice. This grant allowed the Port Authority Police to establish a formal Youth Services Unit consisting of 3 police officers, 3 social workers, and a program director. During the first 18 months, 3,600 youth were contacted by the Youth Services Unit (YSU), representing a 71 percent increase over the previous years' efforts. In October 1977, LEAA funding ended and YSU needed to convince management to request funds from the Port Authority to continue the program. Management saw several advantages to the program that justified its expense. These were:

- savings in human costs every time a runaway was prevented from getting to the streets;
- savings in costs to the terminal and the Port Authority because the youth were no longer available to attract pimps and other undesirables into the terminal causing a security hazard to passengers and other customers; and,
- savings in costs to the surrounding community by eliminating the potential for crimes that runaways, if unassisted, might commit to survive on the streets.

Management convinced the Port Authority and the fiscal year budget was written to include $200,000 for the Youth Services Unit.

Several potentially serious obstacles to YSU were avoided during development of the program. Some of these were:

- Lack of support for the program within the Port Authority. The moving forces behind the drive to establish a viable program made sure to coordinate with immediate and top-level management at all times. This ensured support.
- Lack of cooperation, even hostility, from other police forces and special services units within New York City. The city has several police authorities with jurisdiction over runaway youth. Coordination with these units avoided turf conflict problems and led to the eventual recognition of YSU as an important special services unit for runaways.
- Misunderstanding of the intent of the program by the community that could have led to opposition. This was avoided through a low-key, coordinated public relations program backed up by facts and figures about benefits to the community.

Operations and Organization

The YSU takes an active intervention approach in identifying and assisting runaways. The Unit employs Port Authority Police with full police powers to intervene with runaways, and the New York Family Court Act gives police the right to stop minors, including suspected runaways, and ask for identification. The YSU believes that it cannot afford to wait until the runaway approaches someone for help because either that person may exploit the youth or the youth may be approached by someone who would harm him. Therefore, the YSU employs plainclothes Port Authority Police, with training and experience in juvenile justice, to mingle with the crowds and "hang out" in the bus terminal while watching for youth who either are unaccompanied by an adult, appear to be a runaway, or appear to need assistance even if accompanied by an adult. Once sighted, the youth is approached, the officer identifies himself, and the youth is asked for identification, why he is in the terminal, and where he is going. If the officer's suspicions are raised either by inappropriate identification or the youth's story, he is quietly escorted to the YSU office. The YSU outreach concept calls for teams of officers and social workers to approach each youth. The officer has the legal authority to approach and question while the social worker has the skills to calm the youth and help him understand the situation.

The youth is interviewed after entering the office. Parents' names and phone numbers are requested and parents or guardian are contacted to see if the youth has permission to travel alone. If he has, the youth is released. If not, arrangements are made to return the youth home. Parents are asked to provide or pay for transportation. If they cannot afford it, either the YSU pays for it out of a special fund or Travelers Aid's assistance is enlisted.

Both officers and social workers conduct the initial interviews to hear the youth's story and to check its accuracy. Basic information, such as parents' names, is recorded. Many times it requires all of the special skills of the officer or social worker to get the youth to reveal his true situation. If they suspect that the youth ran because of abuse and/or neglect or because of a serious family problem, YSU refers the youth either to a local social services program, or if the youth is returning home, to an agency near the home. The YSU utilizes, through informal agreements, many local resources for kids. These include such services as protective services if abuse or neglect is suspected; non-residential counseling services; food and clothing programs; medical and dental services; and, if needed, a special program for teenage prostitutes. The YSU goal is to return the youth home within 24 hours. Sometimes this is not possible and the youth must be referred to a shelter care facility. Some youth are referred to the city's juvenile detention facility (a locked facility) if it is suspected that the youth will run away from a non-secure shelter.

Approaching Runaways

Active intervention requires special ways of approaching and handling suspected runaways. Special techniques are also necessary because many of the youth have been educated on the streets—they're tough, sometimes delinquent, but almost always capable of conning even the most skeptical.

Youth suspected of being runaways are identified by the YSU's plainclothes officers who "hang around" and mix with crowds where there are heavy customer traffic areas or areas known to draw youth. Instincts acquired from years of working with youth and experience at the bus terminal are used to pick out possible runaways. Some of the indicators that the officers look for in identifying possible runaways include:

- **Teenagers**, not excluding youth who look either very young or grown up.
- **Youth traveling together** because many runaways travel with friends; however, officers note that most out-of-state runaways travel alone.
- **Luggage** such as knapsacks, laundry bags, duffelbags, and suitcases. Runaways often carry extra clothes and other belongings, especially those who have planned their trip and come a long way. Local runaways are not as apt to carry luggage.
- **Clothing**. Runaways may have somewhat soiled clothes, particularly those from outside of the city who may have been on the road for a while. Youth traveling to join parents, friends, relatives, etc. generally wear clean clothes.
- **Behavior** indicating confusion, fear, and hesitation; facial expressions may show strain or anxiety. Runaways experience not only the anxiety of being in an unfamiliar place but also the stress caused by whatever made them run away and the stress of the running itself.
- **Company.** Some runaways are traveling with adults when they reach New York City. Officers watch for youth who are with an adult, male or female, who is not their parent.

None of these indicators are proof that someone is a runaway. Presence of these combined with instinct and experience help the YSU officers to guess right most of the time. Again, the officers have the legal right to stop and question any minor. Still, they are aware of the need to observe each individual's right to privacy.

Upon approach, officers identify themselves immediately and promptly ask for identification. They feel direct confrontation is required by law and also is the most effective technique. If identification and permission to travel are not forthcoming then the youth is told to accompany the officer to the YSU Office. A youth's anxiety is eased by the officer stating that they are going to an office, not to the police station or a jail.

Once in the office, the youth is told that his parents must be contacted to learn if the youth has permission to travel. If he has not, then the parents are asked to explain the situation. If it appears that serious family problems are occurring then a social worker may be asked to intervene. YSU workers practice first-aid counseling. They comfort the youth if necessary or confront him if he refuses to tell the truth. In either case, the purpose is to solve the immediate crisis and return the youth home, or refer the case to either local social services or services in the youth's own community.

Management and Staff

YSU personnel consists of the project director (a sargeant in the Port Authority Police), 3 Port Authority policemen, 3 social workers, and a secretary.

The project director has overall management responsibility for the project. He coordinates and supervises all staff while also taking an occasional shift on the floor of the terminal, counseling runaways, and remaining on call 24 hours a day. He is responsible for all records and required documentation. His duties include public speaking and relations with the community and media. His responsibilities also entail initiating and maintaining relationships with agencies to which the Unit refers runaways. Relations with other units within the Port Authority and New York City Police Departments are handled by the sargeant.

The Unit's plainclothes policemen have been with the program since its inception. These officers volunteered for this duty—they were not assigned. This genuine concern is the most important characteristic required for this duty. The officers perform not only all standard police duties within the terminal but also exercise the extra patience, understanding, and skill to work with runaways and their families. Each officer must also coordinate his role daily with the social worker, while remaining aware of his special duties required by his law enforcement status.

The Unit's social workers are responsible for bringing about the successful resolution of the runaway's most immediate crisis. First-aid counseling includes comforting and reassuring, assisting the runaway and the family, and helping the runaway and family to identify and think through possible solutions.

Social workers must follow through on the joint decision as to what options to pursue. When time permits, social workers will contact the youth, the family, or the service agency to check on progress being made. Finally, the Unit's social workers must define for themselves a role within their formal responsibilities that allows them to work comfortably with the Unit's police officers. Knowing when to take leadership, coordinate, or support the Unit's police requires skill and an understanding of police responsibilities and functions. The YSU's social workers are experienced with youth and families; all have formal education in counseling. Additionally, each has counseled runaways and delinquents.

The Unit's police and social workers work in teams of two. The Unit operates every day of the week. Monday through Friday, one team works 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and another team is on from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. A third team provides double coverage during the peak hours of 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Weekends are covered by a single team from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

Responsibilities and Recordkeeping

The Youth Service Unit is well organized. Formal lines of authority and communication exist between line staff (officers and social workers) and the Unit director. These are reinforced by the director's fulltime commitment to the program and his practice of taking a turn on the floor regularly. Top-level management's involvement is enhanced because the director reports directly to the Commanding Officer of the Port Authority Police. Efficient operations are also greatly increased because the commander has authorized the director to deal directly with the Port Authority Bus Terminal Manager.

A final organizational strength is the relationship between officers and social workers. The foundation for their effective coordination is a clear definition of roles and responsibilities. Still, teams are allowed the flexibility to work out their own relationship within the defined responsibilities, which allows varying styles and personalities to fit together.

Thorough records are maintained by the Unit. Records are essential for (1) recognizing the scope and types of problems the Unit addresses, (2) assessing the Unit's effectiveness, and (3) documenting that effectiveness to the public, the immediate community, and the Port Authority. The Unit has the advantage of immediate accessibility to missing persons reports including those on runaways filed by other police jurisdictions. Other records kept consist of:

Juvenile Report: contact date, juvenile's name, address, telephone, complexion, mother's name, father's name, address and telephone.

Investigation Report: reason for contact; family structure; primary type of service provided; previous contacts with the YSU; previous runaway episodes; present involvement with the court, social worker, etc. Additional comments on

the present situation; disposition, or action taken as a result of past contacts; school with address and phone number; the service or agency referred to; whether the referral was voluntary or non-voluntary; and the name of the individual conducting the investigation.

- **Casefiles** maintained on each runaway by social workers: Information on present problems, description of contacts with youth and family, and a record of follow-up contacts is included.

This documentation allows the Unit director to monitor efforts by staff and to gather information that can be compiled into Unit statistics. Statistics compiled are simple and are used mainly for the annual report and public information. They also assist management in program and staff development.

Accounting for the roughly $200,000 yearly budget of the Unit is a full-time job. All accounting and recordkeeping are handled by central office staff within the Port Authority, thus removing a potential burden from the Unit.

Good management includes maintaining community relations through a combination of efforts by the Unit director and a central office public relations department. All requests for information are channeled through the central office and requests deserving special attention are forwarded to the Unit director. The director is also responsible for public speaking and appearances in the community to foster communication. In general, however, the Unit maintains a low profile, thus avoiding unnecessary conflict. Community relations are well developed due to an attentive attitude by top-level management. The Authority's Bus Terminal management sponsors carnival days using the terminal as a festivity center and has undertaken other projects to create goodwill such as a community center for senior citizens in a local neighborhood.

Effectiveness

The Youth Service Unit has accepted a very large challenge. Every day roughly 170,000 people pour through the bus terminal which covers seven city blocks. Many of these are young people. From 1976 to 1979, Unit personnel questioned 13,705 youth under the age of 18 and of these 3,749 were runaways. Undoubtedly, many runaways pass through unidentified by the Unit. The YSU reaches runaways from within and outside of New York City. Surprisingly, in 1979 as many as 67 percent of runaways were from outside of the city with 53 percent of the total from outside of New York State. Understandably, 22 percent of the total from outside the State were from neighboring New Jersey. Still, 30 percent of those from outside of New York had traveled greater distances. The Unit achieves one part of its goal—to identify and intervene with runaways. But how about results? Parents are contacted in roughly 98 percent of the runaway cases and an estimated 90 percent of all runaways assisted return home. The Unit claims that it sees again less than 1 percent of runaways it assists. A striking indicator of effectiveness is cost savings: during the 18 month test period, the Unit saved New York City $1.2 million by finding alternatives to court processing for the runaways it assisted. Although savings in human costs and costs to the facility and community through prevention of potential delinquent acts cannot be measured, these are at least as significant, perhaps more so, than savings to the city court system. Finally, the Unit's success in another area has been noticed by top-level Port Authority officials. The Unit has kept pimps and other undesirables who prey on kids out of the facility, thus enhancing the environment and leading to an increase in patrons.

(For more information, contact Project Director, Youth Services Unit, Port Authority Bus Terminal, 625 8th Avenue, New York, New York 10018, Telephone: 212/563-4026.)

The Bridge, Inc.

The Bridge, Inc. is a multi-service center for youth in Boston that grew out of the efforts of a local priest to assist youth on the streets in need of services such as medical, dental, counseling, food, and shelter, and who are unlikely to seek out established agencies for help. Suspicious of authority or anything "establishment," these young people seldom sought help from traditional agencies. Father Shanley recognized this dilemma and acted as a catalyst by bringing together professionals and paraprofessionals from a variety of fields (medicine, dentistry, mental health, social services, alternative youth services) to discuss the problem. Regular meetings resulted in a plan to develop a streetwork effort that would refer youth to appropriate agencies for services.

Initially, the project consisted of 5 full-time streetworkers who spent their time blending with the street culture in the Kenmore Square area. Free medical care, counseling services, and crisis intervention services for runaways were offered by The Bridge to youth contacted through its outreach efforts.

Seed money was a $30,000 grant from a private foundation, and in 1971, the State Division of Drug Rehabilitation awarded the program $27,000 which gave the program greater legitimacy and increased opportunities for additional funding. A grant from the National Institute of Mental Health made The Bridge a multi-service agency. Several private corporations in the Boston area contributed $5,000 and $10,000 grants to the program.

The funding history of The Bridge indicates a practice of Bridge personnel identifying a need in the community, and approaching private, public, governmental, and non-governmental groups for funding. The Bridge slowly increased in size and services as it diversified its funding sources from 1970-1976.

Significant increases in the numbers of youth served in the Boston street culture occurred while The Bridge was sharing offices with a long-established, larger social services agency called Boston Children Services. Association with this agency gave The Bridge credibility within the city and with the youth services system within the city.

Daily Operations

The Bridge offers a comprenensive range of services to youth on the streets through a team of streetworkers. Streetworkers work several sections of the city, one of which is the Park Square area where several bus terminals are located. Runaways entering Boston by bus often spend a significant amount of time in this area, with some making a living off of the streets by panhandling or prostituting. However, runaways are not the majority of youth in the area who require services. Park Square has become a popular area for homosexual activities and most of these young boys were probably runaways at one time.

The Bridge streetwork, even though the number of runaways assisted is unknown, requires outreach skills techniques that can easily be transfered to any outreach effort aimed at runaway youth. The program employs four full-time streetworkers and one full-time coordinator to operate its streetwork activities. The streetworker initiates contacts with youth on the street and attempts to gain their trust so they can help them in whatever way possible. The worker spends a large part of his time listening to the youths' predicaments and troubles, serving as a counselor of sorts. He can refer youth to several services that The Bridge operates or services provided by other organizations in the city. Another function is to attempt to find jobs for these youth so they can leave behind the hustling.

Services operated by The Bridge to which streetworkers refer youth include:

- free medical and dental care;
- instruction and counseling in, for example, hygiene, sexuality, drugs, education, and employment;
- crisis intervention, individual and family counseling for runaways;
- educational and counseling services, and day care for young single mothers; and,
- job placement services, educational and personal counseling services, and on-the-job training for youths working at The Bridge.

Other services available through outside agencies fall into the following categories: shelter care, food and clothing, dental/medical care, employment counseling, alcohol and drug abuse services, legal help, gay counseling, psychiatric care, rape counseling and treatment, and showers. These services, particularly those available directly from The Bridge, are offered with few requirements of the youths.

Streetworkers Identify Runaways

The most important allies the streetworker has in and around the bus terminals are the street kids themselves. These youth are regulars; they live off these streets. The regulars know immediately when a new face is in town, sometimes a runaway. If the streetworker is trusted as someone who will help without making a lot of demands then he will be told about the runaway. In turn, the runaway will be told about the streetworker. Experienced streetworkers claim that six months may be required to build this kind of relationship. In the meantime much can be done by the streetworker to be effective. The following Bridge program techniques are useful:

- Remain visible by spending time on the streets and in the local hang-outs such as the bus terminal. (Agreements should be worked out with facility management before this is attempted.) However, do not draw unnecessary attention to yourself. Blend in with the culture and the ways of the area.
- Remain accessible by letting youth know your "beat" or hang-outs. You are not an undercover agent. Consider ways for youth to get in touch with you in emergencies, even when you are off-duty.
- Initiate contacts with youth by approaching them openly and honestly. Tell them who you are and what you are there for.
- Consider using some of the regular street people as a way of introduction when approaching someone new to the area who may be a runaway.
- Allow the runaway time to converse with the regulars to confirm your story.
- Do not assume that street youth need assistance, when considering ways to build trust with the regulars. Many are self-sufficient and do not want any other way of life. Instead, mention services that can be used without requiring an immediate change in lifestyle.
- Keep confidential, if possible, any information a youth entrusts to you.
- Do not expect something for nothing. Every time a youth helps you, perhaps tells you about a runaway, do something for that youth.

- Build your own information network among other individuals who work or live in the area (e.g., vendors, police, terminal security, prostitutes, bartenders, and others).
- Deliver as soon as possible when a youth agrees to seek assistance. For instance, if a youth requests medical help, arrange an appointment immediately.
- Follow up when a referral is made by contacting the youth and the service provider. Be sure to listen to the youth's opinions, feelings, etc. about the service; however, also get the providers' opinions as the two often clash.

The streetworker has the following responsibilities:

- **outreach:** to make as many new contacts as possible with youth and to maintain relationships with regulars;
- **assessment:** to assess the needs of individual youth and refer to appropriate services;
- **crisis intervention:** to be prepared to intervene in a crisis, such as an attempted suicide of a runaway, and call for needed support;
- **administration:** to follow up on youth assisted, to keep statistics as required, and to attend weekly staff and group meetings; and,
- **public relations:** to serve as a liaison between the street population and established agencies, and to be a youth advocate.

Suggested qualifications include: (1) knowledge of the streets and street culture, (2) at least two years' experience working with adolescents involved in the drug culture, (3) commitment enough to endure long and odd hours on the streets in all kinds of weather, and (4) tremendous motivation and self-discipline, enough to work long hours unsupervised.

Qualifications are not enough for this job. The Bridge conducts a four week formal training period for every new streetworker. Training consists of:

- **An orientation** during which time the new streetworker is introduced to all of The Bridge's services, and specifically, the outreach component. This is on-the-job orientation in which the streetworker is introduced to his area by his predecessor.
- **Several training sessions** in such topics as birth control, venereal disease, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual assault, adolescent behavior, basic counseling skills, and crisis intervention skills. Some of this training occurs after the streetworker has taken on full responsibilities. Bridge staff conducts almost all of this training, with outside resources such as public health used when feasible.

The streetwork coordinator provides on-going staff development through regular observation of each streetworker on duty and through feedback. Ideas for staff development are also collected from self-evaluations by each streetworker which are gone over jointly with the coordinator.

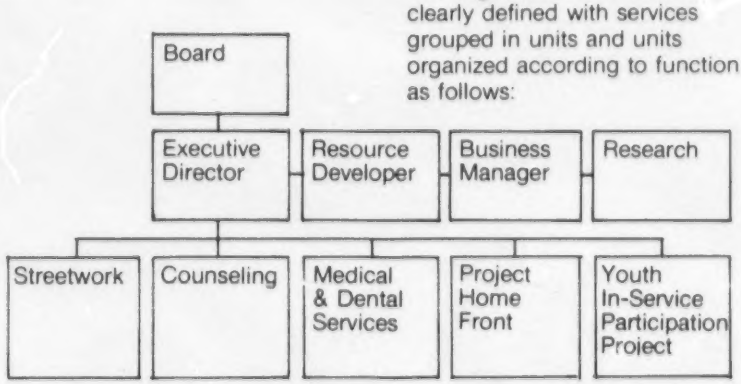
The Streetwork coordinator's responsibilities are:

- **Supervision:** evaluating, monitoring, and taking part in activities on the streets. The coordinator spends roughly one-half to three-fourths of her time on the streets with the team.
- **Personnel:** coordinating team schedules, coordinating training activities for streetwork, providing case consultation as requested by streetworkers.
- **Administration:** weekly monitoring of streetwork statistics, monthly compilation of team statistics, and acting as a liaison between the team and other community resources.
- **Public Relations:** acting as a liaison between the streetwork team and other community resources to which youth are referred by the team.

Streetworkers and the coordinator complete equal shifts, five days a week. All work from roughly 2 p.m. to 11 p.m. four nights a week, with each getting off at 8 p.m. one night a week. Weekends are free. This time off is necessary to prevent burn-out and over-exposure to the streets.

Organization

The Bridge, Inc. is clearly and efficiently organized, the result of many years of operation under intensive scrutiny by funding sources and the general public. The organizational structure is clearly defined with services grouped in units and units organized according to function, as follows:



Each unit supervisor reports directly to the executive director, making for clear lines of authority and communication.

The strengths of the organization of the outreach component are that (1) streetworkers are in daily contact working with their supervisor and (2) streetworkers are encouraged, through daily meetings, to work as a coordinated team.

Inherent disadvantages, such as lack of communication between staff within each service unit, are addressed by weekly meetings with all staff to share information and work out grievances.

Another aspect of The Bridge's organization is clearly written goals. Overall program goals are broken down into service unit goals that are elaborated on by more specific goals. This contributes towards an understanding by all staff of the purposes and goals of their own unit, of the entire organization, and how their unit contributes towards the organization's goals.

Management and Staff

Clearly defined organizational structure and documented goals contribute greatly to the effective management of The Bridge, and specifically, the outreach component. The streetwork coordinator clearly has the authority to manage her unit. Additionally, defined goals make it easier for the coordinator to direct staff and measure appropriateness and value of their efforts. Given the goal of making new contacts with street youth, it is a simple matter for the coordinator to note the number of new contacts each streetworker makes and the number of follow-ups conducted. The information can be used to measure progress towards the goal and also effectiveness of each worker's efforts.

The streetwork coordinator employes several management tools to ensure that job responsibilities are being filled correctly. These are:

- job descriptions, including job title, hours, salary, responsibilities, qualifications required, and supervision conducted;
- Streetworker Case Description Sheet;
- Streetworker In-Depth Contact Log; and,
- The Bridge, Inc. Follow-up Sheet.

This monitoring of workers' efforts must be supplemented by on-site observation of each worker. The coordinator's style allows this observation without disturbance. Many times, the coordinator is asked to work together with the worker in assisting a youth. Observation is the foundation for the feedback the coordinator gives informally and formally during evaluation sessions with the worker.

Evaluation sessions are held regularly to help the worker analyze his own efforts and identify strengths and weaknesses. The worker is asked to complete a self-evaluation that is supplemented by the coordinator's monitoring and observations.

The budget for the outreach component, which totals $90,068, is monitored by centralized accounting procedures. All bookkeeping is centralized also, leaving workers and the coordinator with much needed time to work with the youth.

Effectiveness

During the years for which statistics are available, January 1974 through June 1979, Bridge streetworkers contacted 18,774 individuals in the bus terminal area.

It is estimated that 20 percent or 3,762 of the total number of youths contacted were between the ages of 10 and 17. The exact number of these who were runaways is not known but streetwork personnel believe that a majority were either current runaways or runaways at one time. Many of those contacted have been away from home a long time and are unlikely to return home permanently. Most of these runaways are adept at avoiding any individual or organization that would require them to return home. The Bridge appears to be the most appropriate model for assisting this type of "runaway."

(For more information, contact Streetwork Coordinator, Bridge, Inc., 23 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108, Telephone: 617/523-6649.)

Summary

A program for runaways in and around transportation centers demands awareness, organization, resources, and innovation. The programs outlined above are making significant contributions to assisting runaways. The fact that they exist and are effective proves to all of us that much can be done. At the same time, these programs address a problem which demands more attention and resources. The following brief directory of organizations and programs directly concerned with runaways in and around transportation centers indicates the small amount of attention presently given to this problem. The organizations and programs, however, are valuable sources of information for any individual or organization desiring to do something about the problem.

Directory

National Organizations

Youth Development Bureau
Department of Health & Human Services
Administration of Children, Youth & Families
400 6th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
202/245-2859

Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration
Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20531
202/724-7772

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20850
202/862-2900

National Network for Runaway Youth Services
1705 DeSales Street N.W.
Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
202/466-4212

National Runaway Switchboard
2210 North Halsted
Chicago, IL 60614
Toll Free: (800) 621-4000
For Information: (312) 929-5854

Travelers Aid Association of America
701 Lee Street
Des Plaines, IL 60016
312/298-9390

National Youth Worker Alliance
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 502
Washington, D.C. 20036
202/785-0764

State, Local, and Private Organizations

The Bridge, Inc.
3151 Redwood Avenue
San Diego, CA 92104
714/280-6150

Arthur D. Little, Inc.
Youth and Family Unit
1735 Eye Street N.W.
Suite 513
Washington, DC 20006
202/223-4400

Huckleberry House
1430 Masonic Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94117
415/431-4376

Covenant House
"Under 21"
260 West 45th Street
New York, NY 10036
212/354-4323

Project Contact
315 East 10th Street
New York, NY 10009
212/533-3570

Children of the Night
315 Reeves Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
213/657-1738

Focus Youth Services
1916 Goldring
Las Vegas, NV 89106
702/384-2914

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